[For definitions and explanations of native terms see Index, category 116, 6: Spate AW1 India, pp. 789-821.]

sambandham - institutionalized form of sexual union between men of a higher caste and women of a lower one.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll

Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected Parent, or towards the higher casteman, was always shown in Kerala by not wearing anything in his presence above the waist, be one man or woman. Basically, this has changed but little, the Nambudri Brahmin always praying in his private temple with only a loin cloth on, the modern Tiya factory girl now removing the blouse which she has taken to wearing before some important personage of her kin group, so that her breasts are exposed. What is a less frequent sight nowadays is Nayar, Tiya or Kammalan women in the streets and on the roads without some covering over the upper parts of their bodies. Lower caste people, however, Cherumas, Pulayas and aboriginals, being less affected by progress, are still to be seen on the highways, their shapely bodies exposed from the waist upwards.

A striking phenomenon in Kerala is the coexistence, even today, of the two radically opposed systems of *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) and of *makkathayam* (patriliny). In the first, children are born into their mother's caste, while in the other they are born into their father's caste. Inheritance is through the mother's brother in the first instance, and through the father in the second. The matrilineal people are grouped in matrilineal clans called *tarawads*, of which the senior male member, the *karanavan*, is the recognized head; the patrilineal people have patrilineal clans called by the same name, *tarawad*, also with the senior male as the *karanavan*, but at the same time, they observe descent through the mother, and all are members of matrilineal descent groups known as *illams* or *kiriyams*. While castes and, strictly speaking, subcastes are in principle endogamous, clans and lineages are definitely exogamous, marriage being matrilocal in the case of matrilineal people and patrilocal in the case of patrilineal people.[1]

Of the high castes, only the Nambudri Brahmins are *makkathayam*. They have patrilineal *gothras* or lineages which are exogamous, and patrilineal clans like *tarawads* which they, however, call *illams*. In olden days, only the eldest son could contract a regular marriage within his caste, marriage being polygamous and patrilocal. The younger sons were either expected to live as *brahmacharyas* (bachelor religious devotees) or could cohabit with Nayar women in a form of union known as *sambandham* to which we shall revert in a moment. They were maintained by their own efforts (they generally became cooks) and by a meagre allowance from the family *illam*. This has now been changed by

[1] I continue to make use of the terms *matrilocal* and *patrilocal* here, rather than *uxorilocal* and *virilocal* as still being perfectly adequate as they were for Ceylon previously.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll

as ginger and chillies, palm sugar, mangoes and bananas, betel leaf, tea and coffee. There are two main paddy (unhusked rice) harvests, the *kanni* in September and until November, depending on the type of rice planted and where, and the *magaram* in January and February.

A system of land-tenure and tenancy very special to Kerala is in existence in the state and its principal characteristics may be summed up as follows. Freehold land owners are called *janmis* and they are entitled to the absolute proprietorship of the land; they may mortgage or lease it to anyone as they wish. They are themselves nearly always non-cultivating. The first kind of tenure to which they may resort is called *kanam* and he who holds the lease is known as the *kanamdar*. This is a curious type of arrangement between landlord and tenant, by which the latter deposits a certain sum with the *janmi*, who in return pays interest on the amount as if it were a loan. The *kanamdar* then has the right to work the land or to lease it out to someone else. Every year he pays rent, an adjusted sum as the interest received from the landlord is deducted. Once every twelve years, a so-called renewal fee is paid by the tenant equal to three times the annual rent, and this gives him the right of possession for a further twelve years. Should he wish to give up the lease, the original deposit will be returned to him by the *janmi*. Most *kanamdars* sub-let and do not cultivate the land themselves.

The *kanamdars* often lease out the land as a *kanam* tenure too; but if they do not, it is as a *verumpattam* lease that they do so. This is a simple affair held for one year at a time, by which the tenant pays a fixed rent, or for several years, in which case it is called a customary *verumpattam*, and a renewal fee then becomes necessary, payable between five and twelve years. This lease is used only for paddy fields. Tenants of this category often sub-lease in the same way to others, who cultivate the land either themselves, or, more usually, employ labourers to do so. These labourers are of two kinds, free and tied. The former are coolies hiring themselves out for wages, while the others are agrarian farmhands who receive only board, lodging and clothing from the master responsible for them.

Customary *verumpattam* tenure of palm gardens for the production of coconuts or arecanuts is called *kuzhikanam*. The twelve year renewal fee is equal to the amount made on the garden in the last year and a half of the lease. Virgin and waste land, which nevertheless always has a *janmi* somewhere, is also let out on this type of tenure. The land owner has the right to evict the tenant if he has made no improvement of the land during his period of lease. House-sites occupied by tenants

● 104

amsham---a local area; a small county
anandravan---the eldest male member of the taravād is called Karanavan. All male members who are junior to him are called anandravan.
kaniyan--astrologer
karakkars--villagers
karanavan--senior male of the women's taravad
kāvadi--food offerings (milk or fish)
kulams--exogamous subdivisions of the castes
kuttams--Nayar assemblies (political)
mach champikkar--the masters of ceremonies at a Nayar Tali-kettu (in Travancore)
manavalan (pillai)--bridegroom
mantrams--magical verses
mattu (change)--a rite or service performed following childbirth for purification purposes (by members of the mannan castes for Nayars).
nambudri--chief priests (Brahman)
sambandham--an alliance between a man and woman by reason of which they in accordance with the custom of the community to which they belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to do so as man and wife.

sanchayanam--the disposal of the cremated remains of a dead person on the 14th day after the initial funeral

sēshakriya--offerings made to the spirit of a dead person

stānis--chieftains of the Nad

tarwād (taravād)--a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor

vitu--a Nayar house (including grounds)